

STRATEGIC REVIEW
WINTER 1979CVA 1.04 Sullivan, David
ORAL SALT (Corea)
SullivanTHE LEGACY OF SALT I:
SOVIET DECEPTION AND U.S. RETREAT

DAVID S. SULLIVAN



THE AUTHOR: Mr. Sullivan assumed the post of Legislative Assistant for Military Affairs and SALT to Senator Lloyd Bentsen (D-Tex.) after serving as a strategic analyst in the Central Intelligence Agency from 1971 to 1978. His service in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1966 to 1970 included a tour in Vietnam as a Vietnamese Language and Intelligence Officer. He received a Master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University and was editor of *Revolutionary War: Western Response* (1971), *Change and the Future International System* (1972), and the *Columbia Journal of International Affairs*. The views expressed in this article should not be attributed to Senator Bentsen.

IN BRIEF

In SALT I the United States fell victim to Soviet deceit, and to its own gullibility and myopic assumptions. In essence, the United States traded off its superior ABM technology in return for what proved to be illusory constraints on Soviet offensive strategic capabilities. Carefully shrouding their ongoing and ambitious strategic programs, the Soviets negotiated ceilings that in no way compromised their force goals. They used this deception and loopholes in the SALT agreements both to camouflage and legitimize a thrust to strategic superiority that will endure at least into the 1980s. As the debate over the ratification of SALT II gathers, the question becomes ever more insistent: Has the United States learned from its blatant mistakes or is it destined to compound them, with ever more dire consequences for its security?

The Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) between the United States and the Soviet Union are significantly shaping the terrain that will hold the strategic environment of the future. The SALT I records of May 1972–October 1977 have been extended for over a year. Many of their provisions will be continued and expanded in the emerging SALT II Agreement. In the meantime, awesome strides by the Soviet Union in strategic programs and weapons deployments since 1972 have startled many U.S. policy-makers. Hindsight illuminates more clearly Soviet negotiating behavior and intentions in May 1972 as indicators of future behavior and intentions. It is therefore vitally important, as

we approach the ratification debate over SALT II, that we recognize keenly the lessons of the past.

In casting this backward look, this article advances five general propositions about the "arms race" and SALT. The first proposition is that SALT has not led to true or balanced arms control. The Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972 is not a valid exception to this statement, nor was the required deactivation of the 210 old Soviet SS-7 and SS-8 intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) under the Interim Agreement on Offensive Systems. The ABM Treaty in effect limited only U.S. ABMs; there is no known evidence that in 1972 the Soviets planned to deploy more than the ABM